

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for tightening a mounting member relative to a tubular receiver, wherein at least a portion of the mounting member is received within a passage defined by the tubular receiver, comprising:

a cross member extending through an interior defined by the mounting member;

an opening in the mounting member;

an engagement member movably mounted within the interior of the mounting member; and

an operating arrangement interconnected with the engagement member for imparting movement to the engagement member;

wherein the operating arrangement and the engagement member are configured and arranged to move the engagement member between an operative position in which the engagement member bears against the cross member and extends through the opening in the mounting member into engagement with the receiver to urge an area of the mounting member against one or more internal surfaces defined by the receiver, and an inoperative position in which the engagement member is moved out of engagement with the receiver;

wherein the mounting member defines a longitudinal axis and wherein the operating arrangement is carried by the mounting member, wherein the operating arrangement includes a manually rotatable input member secured to the mounting member for rotational movement about an axis of rotation generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mounting member, and an actuator member connected between

the input member and the engagement member, wherein manual rotation of the input member causes the actuator member to move the engagement member between the operative and inoperative positions.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the tubular receiver comprises a vehicle-mounted hitch receiver.

3. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the hitch receiver and the mounting member define aligned openings when the mounting member is positioned within the passage of the hitch receiver, and wherein the cross member comprises a pin that extends through the aligned openings in the hitch receiver and the mounting member for preventing withdrawal of the mounting member from the passage of the hitch receiver.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The device of claim 1,~~ A device for tightening a mounting member relative to a tubular receiver, wherein at least a portion of the mounting member is received within a passage defined by the tubular receiver, comprising:

a cross member extending through an interior defined by the mounting member;

an opening in the mounting member;

an engagement member movably mounted within the interior of the mounting member; and

an operating arrangement interconnected with the engagement member for imparting movement to the engagement member;

wherein the operating arrangement and the engagement member are configured and arranged to move the engagement member between an operative position in which the engagement member bears against the cross member and extends through the opening in the mounting member into engagement with the receiver to urge an area of the mounting member against one or more internal surfaces defined by the receiver, and

an inoperative position in which the engagement member is moved out of engagement with the receiver; and

_____ wherein the engagement member comprises a cam having first and second
20 spaced apart areas that are configured such that, when the cam is in the operative position, the first area bears against the cross member and against an internal surface defined by the mounting member and the second area extends through the opening in the mounting member into engagement with the receiver.

5 5. (Original) The device of claim 4, wherein the operating arrangement is carried by the mounting member, and includes a manually operable input member secured to the mounting member, and an actuator member connected between the input member and the cam, wherein manual operation of the input member causes the actuator member to move the cam between the operative and inoperative positions.

6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the cam includes limiting structure that interacts with the actuator member for limiting the range of movement of the cam between the operative and inoperative positions.

5 7. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the mounting member defines an outer end located exteriorly of the passage defined by the hitch receiver, wherein the input member is mounted to the outer end of the mounting member and wherein the actuator member comprises an axially extending actuator rod that extends through the interior of the mounting member.

5 8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein the input member is rotatably mounted to the outer end of the mounting member, and wherein the actuator rod and the input member are interconnected via a threaded connection such that rotation of the input member causes axial movement of the actuator rod that imparts movement to the cam for moving the cam between the operative and release positions.

9. (Original) The device of claim 8, wherein the cam includes engagement surfaces that interact with the mounting member to prevent rotation of the cam upon rotation of the input member.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of selectively securing a mounting member to a hitch receiver of a vehicle, wherein the mounting member is associated with an equipment carrier that includes a support member extending upwardly from the mounting member, and wherein the hitch receiver defines a passage within which the mounting member is received, comprising the steps of:

engaging a transverse member within an interior defined by the mounting member; and

applying a transverse force urging the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver, by engaging a locking member with the transverse member, and resisting movement of the locking member in a first transverse direction while moving the locking member in a second transverse direction, opposite the first transverse direction, through an opening in the mounting member into engagement with a surface defined by the hitch receiver, wherein the locking member is configured such that movement of the locking member in the second transverse direction into engagement with the surface defined by the hitch receiver applies a transverse force to the mounting member in the first transverse direction that engages the mounting member with the hitch receiver, wherein the step of moving the locking member in the second transverse direction is carried out by means of an actuator arrangement carried by the mounting member, wherein the actuator arrangement is operable independently of the upwardly extending support member to cause movement of the locking member in the second transverse direction.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 10, wherein the step of engaging a transverse member within an interior defined by the mounting member is carried out~~ A method of selectively securing a mounting member to a hitch receiver of a vehicle, wherein the hitch receiver defines a passage within which the mounting member is received, comprising the steps of:

engaging a transverse member within an interior defined by the mounting member, by engaging a pin member with the mounting member and the hitch receiver

through aligned openings defined by the mounting member and the hitch receiver when the mounting member is received within the passage of the hitch receiver; and

10 applying a transverse force urging the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver, by engaging a locking member with the pin member, and resisting movement of the locking member in a first transverse direction while moving the locking member in a second transverse direction, opposite the first transverse direction, through an opening in the mounting member into engagement with a surface defined by the hitch
15 receiver, wherein the locking member is configured such that movement of the locking member in the second transverse direction into engagement with the surface defined by the hitch receiver applies a transverse force to the mounting member in the first transverse direction that engages the mounting member with the hitch receiver.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of resisting movement of the locking member in the first transverse direction is carried out by engaging a first portion of the locking member with the pin member and with an internal surface defined by the mounting member adjacent the opening in the mounting member
5 through which the pin member extends.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of moving the locking member in the second transverse direction is carried out by means of an actuator arrangement carried by the mounting member.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the locking member comprises a cam having a first portion that engages the pin member and the internal surface of the mounting member to resist movement of the cam in the first transverse direction, and a second portion spaced from the first portion that is moved in the second
5 transverse direction into engagement with the surface of the hitch receiver by operation of the actuator arrangement.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the actuator arrangement includes an input member movably mounted to the mounting member and an actuator member interconnected between the input member and the cam, wherein operation of the

actuator arrangement is carried out by manually engaging the input member at a location
5 exteriorly of the mounting member.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of moving the second portion of the cam into engagement with the internal surface of the hitch receiver is carried out by pivoting the cam in the second transverse direction via axial movement of the actuator member caused by operation of the input member.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the cam includes limiting surfaces that interact with the actuator to limit movement of the cam relative to the actuator member.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the input member is rotatably mounted to the mounting member, and wherein the input member and the cam are interconnected such that rotation of the input member causes axial movement of the actuator member.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, including the step of engaging the cam with the mounting member to prevent rotation of the mounting member upon rotation of the input member.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of manually engaging the input member is carried out so that the input member is rotated relative to the mounting member, wherein a threaded connection is interposed between the input member and the actuator member for causing axial movement of the cam.

21. (Currently Amended) A tightening arrangement for use with a mounting member configured for engagement within a passage defined by a vehicle-mounted hitch receiver that defines an internal passage, ~~wherein the hitch receiver and the mounting member define aligned openings which receive a transverse member for~~
5 ~~preventing relative axial movement between the mounting member and the hitch receiver,~~
comprising:

a ~~movable-pivotable~~ engagement member ~~interconnected with~~ carried by the mounting member, wherein the engagement member is located within an interior defined by the mounting member;

10 a transverse surface located within the interior of the mounting member;
and

an actuator interconnected with the engagement member and with the mounting member, wherein the actuator is operable to ~~move-pivot~~ the engagement member between an operative position and a release position;

15 wherein the engagement member is configured such that, when the engagement member is ~~in-pivoted from the release position to~~ the operative position, a first area of the engagement member engages the transverse ~~member-surface~~ and a second area of the engagement member extends into engagement with a surface defined by the receiver to apply a transverse force to the hitch receiver that urges the mounting
20 member transversely into engagement with the hitch receiver, and such that, when the engagement member is ~~in-pivoted from the operative position to~~ the release position, the transverse force applied to the hitch receiver is relieved so as to relieve the force urging the mounting member transversely into engagement with the hitch receiver.

22. (Currently Amended) The tightening arrangement of claim 21, wherein the ~~mounting member defines an interior and wherein the engagement member is located within the interior of the mounting member~~ includes an opening, and wherein the engagement member moves through an the opening in the mounting member into
5 engagement with the hitch receiver.

23. (Currently Amended) The tightening arrangement of claim 22, wherein the actuator is axially movable and is interconnected with the engagement member via a pivot connection for ~~providing-pivoting movement of~~ the engagement member between the operative and release positions upon axial movement of the actuator.

24. (Original) The tightening arrangement of claim 23, wherein the actuator includes an input member that is secured to the mounting member, wherein a

threaded connection is interposed between the input member and the actuator for providing axial movement of the actuator upon rotation of the input member to move the engagement member between the operative and release positions.

25. (Original) The tightening arrangement of claim 24, wherein the engagement member is configured to interact with the mounting member so as to prevent rotation of the engagement member relative to the mounting member upon rotation of the input member.

26. (Currently Amended) ~~The tightening system of claim 23, wherein the transverse member comprises~~ A tightening arrangement for use with a mounting member configured for engagement within a passage defined by a vehicle-mounted hitch receiver that defines an internal passage, wherein the hitch receiver and the mounting member
define aligned openings, comprising:

_____ a pin member that extends through aligned openings in the hitch receiver and the mounting member for preventing relative axial movement between the mounting member and the hitch receiver;

_____ a movable engagement member interconnected with the mounting member;

and

_____ an axially movable actuator interconnected with the engagement member and with the mounting member, wherein the actuator is interconnected with the engagement member via a pivot connection and is operable to move the engagement member between an operative position and a release position upon axial movement of the actuator;

_____ wherein the engagement member is configured such that, when the engagement member is in the operative position, a first area of the engagement member engages the transverse member and a second area of the engagement member extends into engagement with a surface defined by the receiver to apply a transverse force to the hitch receiver that urges the mounting member transversely into engagement with the hitch receiver, and such that, when the engagement member is in the release position, the

transverse force applied to the hitch receiver is relieved so as to relieve the force urging the mounting member transversely into engagement with the hitch receiver;

wherein the mounting member defines an interior and wherein the engagement member is located within the interior of the mounting member and moves through an opening in the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver,

wherein movement of the engagement member to the operative position functions to

5 apply an axial force to the pin member that prevents withdrawal of the pin member from the openings in the hitch receiver and the mounting member.

27. (Currently Amended) A system for preventing movement of a mounting member relative to the hitch receiver of a vehicle, comprising:

a movable engagement member carried by the mounting member and located within an interior defined by the mounting member;

5 a transversely extending member located within the interior defined by the mounting member; and

an actuator carried by the mounting member and interconnected with the engagement member, wherein the actuator, the mounting member and the engagement member are configured such that operation of the actuator moves the engagement

10 member axially against the transversely extending member and laterally against the hitch receiver to apply a transverse force to the mounting member that urges the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver, wherein the mounting member defines a longitudinal axis and wherein the actuator includes a manually rotatable input member secured to the mounting member for rotational movement about an axis of rotation
15 generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mounting member, and an actuator member connected between the input member and the engagement member, wherein manual rotation of the input member causes the actuator member to move the engagement member between the operative and inoperative positions..

28. (Original) The system of claim 27, wherein the mounting member includes a first wall having an opening and a second wall opposite the first wall, wherein

the engagement member moves through the opening in the first wall into engagement with the hitch receiver for urging the second wall against an adjacent wall defined by the hitch receiver.

29. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 28, wherein ~~the actuator is manually operable and is carried by the mounting member so as to be accessible from the exterior of the mounting member, wherein the~~ actuator is extendible and retractable and is pivotably interconnected with the engagement member such that extension and retraction of the actuator upon rotation of the input member is operable to pivot the engagement member into engagement with the hitch receiver when the engagement member is engaged with the transversely extending member.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 27,~~ A system for preventing movement of a mounting member relative to the hitch receiver of a vehicle, comprising:

a movable engagement member carried by the mounting member and located within an interior defined by the mounting member;

a transversely extending member located within the interior defined by the mounting member; and

an actuator carried by the mounting member and interconnected with the engagement member, wherein the actuator, the mounting member and the engagement member are configured such that operation of the actuator moves the engagement member axially against the transversely extending member and laterally against the hitch receiver to apply a transverse force to the mounting member that urges the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver;

wherein the engagement member and the actuator are interconnected via a pivot connection, and wherein the engagement member and the actuator include limiting structure for limiting the range of pivoting movement of the engagement member relative to the actuator.

31. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 27,~~ A system for preventing movement of a mounting member relative to the hitch receiver of a vehicle, comprising:

a movable engagement member carried by the mounting member and located within an interior defined by the mounting member;

5 a transversely extending member located within the interior defined by the mounting member; and

an actuator carried by the mounting member and interconnected with the engagement member, wherein the actuator, the mounting member and the engagement member are configured such that operation of the actuator moves the engagement

10 member axially against the transversely extending member and laterally against the hitch receiver to apply a transverse force to the mounting member that urges the mounting member into engagement with the hitch receiver;

wherein the movable engagement member is movable within an interior defined by the mounting member by rotation of the actuator, and wherein the movable engagement member and the mounting member include adjacent surfaces that cooperate upon rotation of the actuator to prevent rotation of the movable engagement member so as to provide axial movement of the engagement member upon rotation of the actuator.

15 32. (New) The device of claim 1, wherein and wherein the actuator member and the input member are interconnected via a threaded connection such that rotation of the input member causes axial movement of the actuator member that imparts movement to the engagement member for moving the engagement member between the operative and release positions.

5 33. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the actuator arrangement includes an input member rotatably mounted to the mounting member and an actuator member interconnected between the input member and the locking member, wherein rotation of the actuator arrangement is carried out by manually rotating the input member at a location exteriorly of the mounting member.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the step of moving the locking member into engagement with the internal surface of the hitch receiver is carried out by

pivoting the locking member in the second transverse direction via axial movement of the actuator member caused by rotation of the input member.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, including the step of engaging the locking member with the mounting member to prevent rotation of the mounting member upon rotation of the input member.

36. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein a threaded connection is interposed between the input member and the actuator member for causing axial movement of the locking member in response to rotation of the input member.